



# Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

July 2015



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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## **Honolulu FSA County Office has Relocated**

The Honolulu FSA County Office is now providing service out of the Airport Industrial Park at 3375 Koapaka Street, Suite B-211, Honolulu. The new phone number is 808-861-8538.

## **Reimbursement of Transportation Costs**

Beginning July 20, 2015 farmers and ranchers residing outside the contiguous continental United States can enroll in the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP) for fiscal year 2015. Producers must submit their application to their Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office by September 11, 2015. Applicants will have until November 2, 2015, to provide supporting documentation.

The 2014 Farm Bill reauthorized the RTCP program, which offsets a portion of the costs of transporting agricultural products over long distances. The program allows farmers and ranchers in Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to recover a portion of their transportation costs.

Payments are calculated based on the costs incurred for transportation of the agricultural commodity or inputs, subject to an \$8,000 per producer cap per federal fiscal year. In the event that claims for payments exceed the funds available from the program for a fiscal year, payments will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

For more information on the RTCP program, contact the FSA County Office or the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport). Click on the hyperlink for your [local FSA county office](#).

## **County Committee Nominations Open**

The nomination period for Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is June 15, 2015 through August 3, 2015. To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election, and reside in the local administrative area where the person is nominated.

Farmers and ranchers may nominate themselves or others. Organizations representing minorities and women may also nominate candidates. To become a candidate an eligible individual must sign the nomination form, FSA-669A. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections). Nomination forms for the 2015 election must be postmarked or received in the FSA County Office by close of business on August 3, 2015. Elections will take place this fall.

County committees make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs and other agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms, and in Hawaii and the Pacific Basin committees consist of three members that are elected by eligible producers.

Farm Service Agency will mail ballots to eligible voters beginning November 9, 2015. Ballots are due back to the local county office via mail or in person by December 7, 2015. Newly elected committee members and alternates take office on January 1, 2016.

| <b>Hawaii State &amp; Pacific Basin Farm Service Agency Office</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| 300 Ala Moana Blvd, Rm 5-108<br>Honolulu, HI 96850<br>Ph: (808) 541-2600<br>Fax: (855)356-9493   | Diane Ley<br>State Executive Director<br>Steve Bazzell<br>Farm Program Loan Chief                    |
| <b>Hawaii County Farm Service Agency Hilo Office</b>   |  |
| 154 Waiuanue Ave, Room 219<br>Hilo, HI 96720<br>Ph: (808)933-8381 x 1<br>Fax: (855)356-9492  | Lester Ueda<br>County Executive Director<br>Linda Kow<br>Farm Loan Manager                           |
| <b>Honolulu County Farm Service Agency Office</b>  |  |
| 3375 Koapaka Street, Suite B-211<br>Honolulu, HI 96819<br>Ph: (808)861-8538<br>Fax: (855)356-9490  | Jason Shitanishi<br>County Executive Director<br>Melissa Rodriques<br>Farm Loan Manager              |
| <b>Kauai County Farm Service Agency Office</b>   |  |
| 4334 Rice St, Suite 103<br>Lihue, HI 96766<br>Ph: (808)245-9014 x 2<br>Fax: (855)356-9495  | Robert Ishikawa<br>County Executive Director<br>Melissa Rodriques<br>Farm Loan Manager               |
| <b>Maui County Farm Service Agency Office</b>  |  |
| 77 Hookele St, Suite 201<br>Kahului, HI 96732<br>Ph: (808)871-5500 x 2<br>Fax: (855)356-9494   | James Robello<br>County Executive Director<br>Richard 'Buddy' Nichols<br>Farm Loan Manager           |
| <b>Guam-CNMI Farm Service Agency Office</b>  |  |
| 770 East Sunset Blvd. Room 265<br>Barrigada, GU 96913<br>Ph: (671)472-7568<br>Fax: (855)356-9491<br>CNMI (670)234-0896   | Thomas Camacho<br>County Executive Director<br>Fred San Nicolas II<br>Farm Loan Assistant<br>Manager |
| <b>American Samoa Farm Service Agency Office</b>   |  |
| Pago Plaza Building, Room 213<br>P. O. Box 3661<br>Pago Pago, AS 96799<br>Ph: (684)633-1031 x 2<br>Fax: (684)633-7614  | Josie Malepeai Lealasila<br>Agricultural Specialist<br>Letisha Gaoā<br>Loan Analyst                  |
| <b>Office Hours: Monday—Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm</b>   |  |
| <b>Next County Committee Meeting Dates:</b>  |  |
| <u>Hawaii County</u> - October 9 at 8:30 am  |  |
| <u>Honolulu County</u> - August 21 at 3:00 pm  |  |
| <u>Kauai County</u> - August 12 at 8:30 am   |  |
| <u>Maui County</u> - August 20 at 8:30 am  |  |
| <u>Guam County</u> - August 12 at 9:00 am  |  |
| <u>CNMI County</u> - August 12 at 9:00 am  |  |
| Contact the County Office to confirm meeting date and time, as budget constraints may limit the County Committee's ability to meet each month. A list of County Offices, contact numbers and addresses may be found at:<br><a href="http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/hi_cof_staff.pdf">http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/hi_cof_staff.pdf</a> |  |

## Documentation for USDA Services Received

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that the Agency provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

As part of FSA's mission to provide enhanced customer service, producers will receive documentation of services requested and provided. From December through June, FSA issued more than 327,000 electronic receipts.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity.

In some cases, a form or document – such as a completed and signed program enrollment form – serve as the customer receipt instead of a printed or electronic receipt. A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

To learn more about FSA, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or to find your local USDA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.



**¡Adios Esta Fred San Nicolas!** Fred has served as the Farm Loan Assistant Manager for Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. In August, Fred will take on a new role as a Farm Loan Program Specialist with the Arizona State Office of the Farm Service Agency. Best wishes are extended to Fred and his family.



## USDA Packages Disaster Protection with Loans



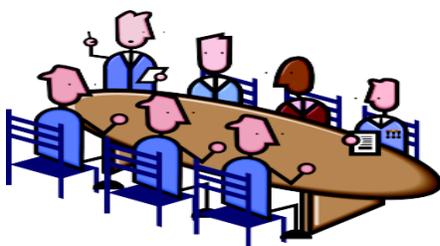
## Hawaii Agricultural Mediation Program

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has certified the Hawaii Agricultural Mediation Program (HIAMP) to provide mediation services to the agricultural community in the state of Hawaii. The program is intended to assist agricultural producers, their lenders and other persons directly affected by the actions of the USDA in resolving disputes. Through the mediation process, a trained, impartial person (mediator) helps participants review their conflicts, identify options and agree on solutions.

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential alternative to the traditional legal and regulatory process. Unlike a judge or arbiter, a mediator has no decision-making authority, but is there to help participants resolve problematic issues and settle disputes. Successful mediation is based on the cooperation and involvement of all participants. Mediation may settle disputes within a participant's financial means, providing a low cost alternative to appeals or too often expensive litigation and/or bankruptcy.

The mediation program has a high success rate and is well supported by government officials and community leaders. Mediation is confidential, and documents are not used for any other legal action against the participants. Mediators can also provide referrals for producers and informally discuss with them issues or concerns. Services under HIAMP are made available free of charge for USDA related cases.

For more information visit HIAMP's website at [www.hiamp.org](http://www.hiamp.org), write [info@emcenter.org](mailto:info@emcenter.org) or call 808-447-1790, extension 101.



Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that producers who apply for loans will be offered the opportunity to enroll in new disaster loss protection created by the 2014 Farm Bill. The new coverage through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is available to applicants who grow non-insurable crops, such as fruit, vegetable and other specialty crops.

New, underserved and limited income specialty growers who apply for farm loans could qualify for basic loss coverage at no cost, or higher coverage for a discounted premium.

The basic disaster coverage protects at 55 percent of the market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of production. Covered crops include "specialty" crops, such as vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, hay, forage, grazing and energy crops. Farm Service Agency allows beginning, underserved or limited income producers to obtain NAP coverage up to 90 days after the normal application closing date when they also apply for FSA credit.

In addition to free basic coverage, beginning, underserved or limited income producers are eligible for a 50 percent discount on premiums for the higher levels of coverage that protect up to 65 percent of expected production at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers also may work with FSA to protect value-added production, such as organic or direct market crops, at their fair market value in those markets. Targeted underserved groups eligible for free or discounted coverage are Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics and women.

Farm Service Agency offers a variety of loan products, including farm ownership loans, operating loans and microloans that have a streamlined application process.

Growers need not apply for an FSA loan, nor be a beginning, limited resource, or underserved farmer, to be eligible for NAP. To learn more, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) or [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans), or contact your local FSA County Office.



## Beginning Farmer Loans

Farm Service Agency (FSA) assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises by providing financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans.

A beginning farmer is defined as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years;
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm;
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA; and
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available through FSA County Offices or at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

| Interest Rates for July 2015  |        |
|---|--------|
| Farm Operating Loans  | 2.50 % |
| MicroLoans  | 2.50 % |
| Farm Ownership Loans  | 3.75 % |
| Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher | 1.50 % |
| Emergency Loans   | 3.50 % |

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

## Filing a Notice of Loss

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing of the CCC-576 is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), producers must file a CCC-576 in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, within the required 15 calendar days.

For prevented planting, the CCC-576 must be filled within 15 calendar days of the final planting date.

| Dates to Remember  |  |
|--------------------|--|
| August 3, 2015     | Deadline to submit nominations for County Committee elections  |
| August 13-16, 2015 | Kauai County Farm Bureau Fair  |
| September 11, 2015 | Deadline to apply for Reimbursement of Transportation Costs Payment Program  |
| September 30, 2015 | Deadline for Hawaii, Maui and Honolulu producers to apply for an Emergency Physical Loss Loan due to high winds and flooding in January 2015 |
| November 2, 2015   | Deadline to submit documentation for Reimbursement of Transportation Costs Payment Program   |
| November 4, 2015   | Deadline for Hawaii County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impact from lava flows  |
| December 7, 2015   | Deadline to submit County Committee election ballots for 2015  |
| February 5, 2016   | Deadline for Guam County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts from Typhoon Dolphin  |
| Continuous         | Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program sign-up   |